

## FLORIDA

**WEATHER:** At the beginning of March, dry conditions spurred land preparations for field crop planting in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. In early March, corn planting was active with oldest fields up to good stands. Many growers irrigated new plantings to ensure proper germination. Small grains were growing well by mid March. Sugarcane harvesting slowed seasonally around Lake Okeechobee with some mills closing. In late March, cold temperatures brought freezes and frosts to some Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas. By the end of the month, field work stopped in some areas due to frost and drought slowing germination and growth of plants. By the end of March, sugarcane harvesting was virtually finished. Panhandle and northern Peninsula producers planned to begin cotton and peanut planting in early April, barring cold weather.

Florida farmers indicated that in early March they intended to plant more cotton and hay, but less corn, peanuts, soybeans, wheat and tobacco in 2006 than in 2005. Producers intend to bale 300,000 acres of hay, an increase of 10,000 acres from the previous year. The acreage planted to cotton is expected to be 105,000 acres, up 19,000 acres or 22 percent from a year ago. Peanut growers intend to plant 145,000 acres, 9 percent less than the 2005 acreage. Winter wheat acreage at 10,000 acres is down 8,000 acres from the previous year. Planted acreage is projected at 1,100 acres for tobacco, down 1,400 acres from a year earlier. Corn and soybean planted acreage is expected to total 60,000 and 8,000 acres, respectively, compared with 65,000 and 9,000 acres in 2005.

## UNITED STATES

**CORN:** Growers intend to plant 78.0 million acres of corn for all purposes in 2006, down 5 percent from 2005 and 4 percent below 2004. If realized, this will be the lowest corn acreage since 2001 when 75.7 million acres were planted for all purposes. Expected acreage is down from last year in most States as producers intend to switch to other less input intensive crops due to high fertilizer and fuel costs. Dry conditions also contributed to lower corn planting intentions in the southern Great Plains.

**SOYBEAN:** Producers intend to plant 76.9 million acres in 2006, up 7 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the largest planted area on record. Acreage increases are expected in all growing areas, except in the central and southern Atlantic Coast States and the southern Great Plains. The largest acreage increase is in North Dakota, where record high soybean yields last year and high input costs have some farmers shifting acreage from other crops to soybeans. Large increases in soybean acreage are also expected across the Corn Belt, including 600,000 more acres in Illinois and 500,000 more acres in Indiana.

**ALL COTTON:** Plantings for 2006 are expected to total 14.6 million acres, 3 percent above last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 14.3 million, also up 3 percent. Growers intend to increase acreage in all the cotton producing States except Alabama and South Carolina, where expected acreage is down slightly from 2005. American-Pima cotton growers intend to increase their plantings 24 percent from 2005, to a record high 334,000 acres. California producers expect to plant 290,000 acres, up 26 percent from last year.

**HAY:** Producers expect to harvest 61.5 million acres of all hay in 2006, down fractionally from 2005. With the exception of Oklahoma, harvested acres are expected to decline or remain unchanged from last year throughout the Great Plains and adjacent areas of the Corn Belt. The State with the largest expected increase is Oklahoma, up 180,000 acres from last year. Wildfires and drought conditions during last fall and winter in Oklahoma combined to limit available pasture and increase supplemental feeding. With hay supplies low, farmers in Oklahoma are expecting to harvest more hay acres this year. The States with the largest decrease in harvested area are North Dakota and Texas, with expected declines of 430,000 and 350,000 acres, respectively, from 2005. Drought conditions have been so severe in Texas that farmers have low expectations about the amount of hay ground they will be able to harvest this year, despite the current low hay supplies in the State.

**PEANUTS:** Producers intend to plant 1.39 million acres of peanuts in 2006, down 16 percent from last year. Of the 10 producing States, 8 intend to plant fewer acres than in 2005, while Mississippi and New Mexico expect acreage to be unchanged from last year. Southeast growers (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina) intend to plant 1.03 million acres, down 15 percent from last year. In the Virginia-North Carolina

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region, producers intend to plant 102,000 acres, down 15 percent from 2005. Growers in the southwest (New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) intend to plant 259,000 acres, down 19 percent from last year. The expected decrease in acreage is attributed to higher supply than in recent years, low farmer stock peanut prices, and higher input costs.

**WINTER WHEAT:** Planted area for the 2006 crop is 41.4 million acres, up 2 percent from 2005, and virtually unchanged from the Winter Wheat Seedings report. Acreage increases from the previous report in many Soft Red Winter growing States were offset by a decrease in Texas. States with the most notable acreage increases were Illinois and North Carolina. Texas and Florida were the only States to show an acreage decrease. Of the total acreage, about 29.8 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 7.42 million acres are Soft Red Winter, and 4.22 million acres are White Winter. Moisture shortages remain a concern in the central and southern Great Plains States. In Texas and Oklahoma, drought conditions have dramatically reduced the crop conditions in comparison to last year. Farther north, crop conditions in Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska also declined during the winter months due to a lack of moisture.

**FLUE-CURED TOBACCO:** Acreage, at 201,100 acres, is 15 percent above a year ago but down 12 percent from 2004. Flue-cured acreage accounts for 66 percent of this year's expected total tobacco acreage. Acreage in North Carolina, the leading flue-cured State, is up 16 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is also expected to increase in South Carolina by 10 percent and in Virginia by 36 percent while Georgia acreage is expected to remain the same. Acreage in Florida is expected to decrease by 56 percent from 2005 due to many of their growers not planting tobacco.

### Prospective plantings for 2006 with comparisons

Crops	Florida				United States			
	2004	2005	Indicated 2006 <sup>1/</sup>	2006 as % of 2005	2004	2005	Indicated 2006 <sup>1/</sup>	2006 as % of 2005
	<i>1,000 acres</i>		<i>Percent</i>		<i>1,000 acres</i>		<i>Percent</i>	
CORN <sup>2/</sup>	70	65	60	92	80,929	81,759	78,019	95
COTTON, UPLAND <sup>2/</sup>	89	86	105	122	13,409	13,925	14,300	103
ALL HAY, HARVESTED	260	290	300	103	61,966	61,649	61,478	100
PEANUTS <sup>2/</sup>	145	160	145	91	1,430	1,657	1,391	84
SOYBEANS <sup>2/</sup>	19	9	8	89	75,208	72,142	76,895	107
TOBACCO, HARVESTED								
All types	--	--	--	--	408.1	298.0	306.6	103
Type 11-14	4.0	2.5	1.1	44	228.4	175.5	201.1	115
WINTER WHEAT <sup>2/</sup>	18	18	10	56	43,350	40,433	41,404	102

<sup>1/</sup> Intended plantings in 2006 as indicated by reports from farmers.

<sup>2/</sup> Planted for all purposes.